United Nations A/C.1/52/PV.17

General Assembly
Fifty-second
First Committee
17th Meeting
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New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Nkgowe . . . . . (Botswana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda items 62 to 83 (*continued*)

Introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/52/L.29, on behalf of 44 delegations: Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and my own delegation.

The collective aspiration of the international community for nuclear disarmament dates back to the beginning of the nuclear age. The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly — resolution 1 (I) of 24 January 1946 — called for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

It is true that in recent years significant progress has been made in bilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations between the two major Powers. The conclusion of the START I and START II treaties and the deep reductions in nuclear arsenals of the Russian Federation and the United States under the START I treaty are major steps forward. We welcome these developments.

It is regrettable, however, that, owing to the inflexible positions of some nuclear-weapon States, there has been no movement whatsoever up till now on nuclear disarmament in the multilateral context.

The year 1995 was the watershed year for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference extended the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons indefinitely. This places enormous responsibility on the nuclear-weapon States. Because the commitment of non-nuclear-weapon States parties is unreserved and total on this score, the political will of some nuclear-weapon States to conduct and bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament — both bilateral and multilateral — ought to be equally forthcoming.

It was also in 1995, at the golden jubilee session of the General Assembly, that we put forward our resolution 50/70 P and had it adopted with the overwhelming support of Member States. It called for the commencement of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. Since then clamour for nuclear disarmament by the international community has been increasing, and rightly so. However, the General Assembly's call in its resolutions 50/70 P and 51/45 O for the commencement of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament remains unheeded by some nuclear-weapon States. This has caused

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us concern, as the CD has been paralysed on this account in the past year.

We must start multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament and other related issues in the Conference on Disarmament, in parallel with bilateral negotiations between the nuclear-weapon States. This task is an imperative of our time. Those nuclear-weapon States should no longer demur or default from this imperative, which is also a reflection of the aspirations of the international community. This imperative is the main theme and thrust of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29.

In the third preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29, the General Assembly would express its determination to achieve a nuclear weapons convention which would prohibit the whole range of nuclear-weapon-related activities — testing, development, production, stockpiling, loan, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons — and would require their destruction and the conclusion of such an international convention at an early date.

In the fifteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 7, the General Assembly would recall the proposal of twenty-eight delegations to the Conference on Disarmament that are members of the Group of 21 for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and would urge the Conference on Disarmament to take into account their proposal in addressing the question of nuclear disarmament.

In the sixteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 7, the General Assembly would commend the initiative by twenty-six delegations to the Conference on Disarmament that are members of the Group of 21, proposing a mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, and would urge the Conference on Disarmament also to take into account the proposed mandate of the twenty-six delegations in this regard.

In operative paragraph 4, the General Assembly would reiterate its call upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake a step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and a phased programme of progressive and balanced deep reductions of nuclear weapons, and to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures with a view to the total elimination of these weapons within a time-bound framework.

In operative paragraph 6, the General Assembly would reiterate its call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early in 1998 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a nuclear weapons convention.

In view of the immense importance of the subject, we hope that the Committee will adopt this draft resolution with the overwhelming support of Member States.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Nepal to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3.

Mr. Shah (Nepal): I have the honour to introduce for the consideration of the First Committee a draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/52/L.3, concerning the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, on behalf of the following 21 delegations: Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own delegation.

This draft resolution is similar in all respects to General Assembly resolution 51/46 B, which was adopted without a vote, except for the addition of a new operative paragraph, paragraph 2, which welcomes that the Kathmandu process will mark its tenth anniversary in 1998.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution, among other things, welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/52/309, in which he expresses his belief that the mandate of the Regional Centre remains valid and that the Centre could be a useful instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region in the post-cold-war period.

The Secretary-General has determined that the consultations carried out by the Director of the Regional Centre with member States and scholars within and outside the region, as well as the meetings organized by the Centre, have confirmed the continuing support for the role of the Regional Centre in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building and the promotion of disarmament and security — a process which is known as the Kathmandu process, as reflected in the resolutions of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General has underlined the strong support of member States and

academic groups within the region for the continuation of this process as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security issues and exploring region-oriented solutions.

In its operative part, the draft resolution, as previously, would have the General Assembly reaffirm its support for the continued operation and further strengthening of the Centre. It expresses appreciation for the continued political support and financial contribution received by the Centre and reiterates the appeal to Member States, in particular those within the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions in order to strengthen the programme of activities of the Regional Centre and its implementation.

In paragraphs 5 and 6, requests are made to the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support, within existing resources, to the Regional Centre in its programme of activities and to report to the General Assembly at its next regular session on the implementation of this draft resolution.

Before concluding, may I express the deep appreciation of the sponsoring delegations for the continued support which Member States, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations have extended to the Regional Centre. I wish also to convey their sincere thanks to those representatives who have spoken highly of the role and activities of the Centre during the current debate of the First Committee. It is the earnest hope of the sponsoring delegations that the draft resolution will be adopted by acclamation.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.14.

Mr. Pal (India): I have the honour to introduce today a draft resolution, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", as contained in document A/C.1/52/L.14 and sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ghana, Guyana, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and India.

This draft resolution is one which, we believe, addresses an issue of great importance to the international community as a whole and to countries seeking to promote the social and economic well-being of their people. A shared awareness of technological advances and their channelization into peaceful purposes will help create a happier world and a safer security environment.

It is widely acknowledged that the development needs of countries today require the infusion of technology — technology which, in some cases, may also have military applications. We recognize that the development and transfers of such dual-use and advanced technologies with possible military applications need to be monitored and regulated in the interests of international security. A new fifth preambular paragraph has therefore been incorporated into the draft resolution specifically to reflect this need. It also has to be recognized, however, that the application of such technologies for civilian and peaceful purposes needs not only to be maintained and encouraged, but indeed promoted.

There are therefore two distinct aspects to this issue. The first is that the development of technology should, in the interests of international security, be directed towards civilian applications. In an interdependent world we have a common future and we must therefore demonstrate a common determination to give science and technology a human face.

The second aspect, as we see it, is to make dual-use and high technologies available on a regulated, yet non-discriminatory, basis to countries which wish to utilize them for civilian and peaceful purposes. This regulation, however, cannot, in our view, be through the ad hoc export control regimes that have been and continue to be set up, and which in effect are no more than exclusive groupings of countries that limit the exchanges of such technologies among themselves while denying access to others that may require them for developmental purposes. Such ad hoc regimes tend to become commercial and economic barriers to normal trade and therefore to the social and economic development of States, particularly developing countries.

On the other hand, we know only too well that such regimes have not been very effective in achieving their stated goal — that is, the control of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the regulation of the flows of such dual-use and high technologies should, to be effective and efficient, be internationally applicable on the basis of multilaterally negotiated and universally accepted guidelines.

In 1990, in implementation of several General Assembly resolutions, a high-level conference on "New trends in science and technology: implications for international peace and security" was held in Sendai, Japan.

The conference was attended by scientists, strategic analysts, arms limitation and disarmament experts, politicians and diplomats from over 20 countries. The outcome of this conference is contained in the report of the Secretary-General in document A/45/568 of 17 October 1990. This was a useful first step in examining the issue.

In our view, the 1990 report now needs to be updated and further developed in order to take cognizance of the very significant developments that have taken place since that time. Last year, resolution 51/39 requested the Secretary-General to undertake this task and to present a report not later than the fifty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, in 1998. This draft resolution [A/C.1.52.L.14] therefore recalls that request. We expect that the updated report would contain recommendations which would assist States to consider the possibility of multilaterally negotiating universal guidelines monitoring the development and regulating the transfer of dual-use and high technologies.

This is an important and — as we are aware — extremely sensitive subject. This should not, however, prevent us from making cautious progress towards a goal with which few can find fault. We hope that the draft resolution will attract the support of a large number of delegations.

Mr. Sugondhabhirom (Thailand): The Thai delegation would like to register its support for the various draft resolutions which share the common goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We find it gratifying that no fewer than 14 draft resolutions concerning the issue have been put forward in the First Committee. This fact, we feel, shows that the international community still regards nuclear disarmament as one of the most important items on its disarmament agenda. The draft resolutions understandably differ from one another, but what is important is that they reflect, more or less, the principles of nuclear disarmament to which Thailand adheres and as long as they do so, the Committee can count on Thailand's support for them.

In particular, Thailand has co-sponsored three draft resolutions among the 14 drafts in cluster 1: draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29, entitled "Nuclear disarmament"; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35, entitled "The nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas"; and draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.37, entitled "Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons".

Thailand feels that draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29, proposed by Myanmar, justly underlines the necessity of the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, and proposes thorough and detailed concrete measures and steps that the international community may take towards realizing that goal.

As for draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.37, proposed by Malaysia, we fully subscribe to its noble objective and the wise Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. We believe this will provide a strong foundation for our efforts in nuclear disarmament.

On draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35, as Thailand is the depositary State of the Bangkok Treaty, we are pleased to co-sponsor this draft resolution, proposed by Brazil, in the hope that one day the entire southern hemisphere, and the entire world, will be free of nuclear weapons.

Three weeks ago in the First Committee the Permanent Representative of Thailand declared:

> "Thailand is fully committed to and supportive of multilateral efforts towards disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. We are of the view that in the post-cold-war era, conditions that might have lent a certain justification to the concepts of nuclear deterrence and nuclear-arms races no longer exist. Unfortunately, we still have to live with the legacy of this bygone era in the form of global nuclear arsenals. Our position on this matter has always been clear: the existence of nuclear weapons is unnecessary and unacceptable". [See A/C.1/52/PV.7]

It is with that conviction that the Thai delegation will vote for these 14 draft resolutions from next Monday onward, and we hope to work with other like-minded countries towards achieving our common goal.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil has the privilege of introducing to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35, entitled "The nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", on behalf of 68 sponsors. Guinea-Bissau and Kenya have joined that group.

Before presenting the draft resolution, let me mention that the Spanish version of the text presents a problem, which was also pointed out last year. In order to fully

reflect the sense intended in the original English text, paragraph 5 of the Spanish text should avoid any reference to the word "zone". There is no such word in the English text, and that is in line with the intention of the sponsors.

Last year the First Committee adopted for the first time a draft resolution on the nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. This year, under item 71 of the agenda, entitled "General and complete disarmament", a revised draft resolution is introduced for consideration. The revision was made to take account of the difficulties and observations communicated to us since last year. We hope the changes made will make possible the support of a larger number of delegations.

When resolution 51/45 B was first presented to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, Brazil stated that one of the most significant past developments in the area of disarmament was that in several parts of the world, the nuclear option had already been ruled out through the formal establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones — first in Latin America, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and subsequently in the South Pacific, through the Treaty of Rarotonga; in South-East Asia, through the Treaty of Bangkok; and more recently through the Treaty of Pelindaba, which covers the African continent.

The States parties to regional treaties, in close consultation with their neighbours, renounce the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accept the stringent verification commitments to that effect. Those States also committed themselves, *inter alia*, not to accept the stationing of nuclear weapons in their respective treaty zones of application, reflecting the wish of their societies to be safeguarded against nuclear warfare.

Last but not least, all of the members of the four nuclear-weapon-free zones have subscribed their support to the common aim of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The General Assembly has already recognized that the areas of application of the four regional treaties and of the Antarctic Treaty contribute to a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. The present draft resolution, of course, neither creates new legal obligations nor contradicts any norm of international law applicable to ocean space, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In this sense, draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35 makes clearer an idea that was already present in last year's resolution. The promotion of the idea that a large part of the globe is, and wishes to remain, nuclear-weapon-free has a demonstration effect and hopefully will give additional impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The sponsors have done their best to accommodate the legitimate concerns of all those countries genuinely interested in advancing the goal of a nuclear-free world. The southern hemisphere considers itself free from the instruments of Armageddon. We have added to our objectives the promotion of cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones, strengthening our resolve to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We hope this draft resolution will receive the favourable vote of a large majority of States, thus confirming that nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament remain our priority task.

Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia): My delegation is taking the floor in support of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.3. Indonesia supports the proposals and objectives contained in the draft resolution concerning the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, since it is beyond doubt that the Centre, through its programme of activities and what has come to be known as the "Kathmandu process", has rendered excellent services in fostering a climate of cooperation and in assisting States in the region to deal with emerging security concerns and disarmament issues.

A mere decade after its establishment, the mandate of the Centre in promoting a climate of cooperation continues to be valid. For these reasons, it is essential to ensure its continued functioning and further strengthening in the interests of enhancing the prospects for peace and disarmament in the region.

In a fitting tribute to commemorate the establishment of the Centre a decade ago and in order to reflect its contributions, my delegation is pleased to announce that Indonesia will be hosting the next United Nations Asia-Pacific meeting on disarmament and regional security, in cooperation with the Centre. This meeting will be held in Jakarta in the last week of January 1998.

Mr. Díaz-Pereira (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Paraguay, in its capacity as coordinator of the Rio Group during this year, is honoured to make the following statement on behalf of the States members of the Group in respect of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35 on "The nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world is clear testimony to the rejection of the nuclear option and the will to translate into reality the commitment entered into by States to free the world from these weapons, which, like all other weapons of mass destruction, pose a serious threat to all humankind.

The Treaty of Pelindaba, adopted on 11 April 1996, together with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Treaty of Bangkok, the Treaty of Rarotonga and the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, are further consolidating the regime of the prohibition of nuclear weapons in the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas situated north of the equator.

The Rio Group stands convinced that these treaties will not only strengthen the international non-proliferation regime but will also promote the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world, which will lead to the gradual expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones until the ultimate objective of all the States Members of the Organization has been attained — a world that is entirely free of nuclear weapons.

For these reasons, the Rio Group will support the draft resolution on "The nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

Mr. Pal (India): I take this opportunity to make some general comments on some of the draft resolutions which are being considered for action under cluster I. It is not surprising that most of the resolutions submitted in this Committee relate to this cluster. The continued existence of nuclear weapons clearly remains the concern of the international community. In our view, there are three mutually supportive draft resolutions that are among the most important resolutions being considered today. Logically, they form a coherent whole, centred as they are around the need, following the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, to commence, and to conclude, negotiations on a nuclear-weapons convention to eliminate all nuclear weapons. The draft resolution on the Advisory Opinion of the Court, contained in document A/C.1/52/L.37, in its second operative paragraph calls upon all States to immediately commence negotiations

> "leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons".

This, we believe, is the task ahead in this crucial area of disarmament, and it is to this objective that we are committed — so much so that we have joined in sponsoring this draft resolution, in spite of our well-known views on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), two preambular paragraphs of which are quoted in this draft. This does not signal any change in our position on the NPT itself, which we still consider an unequal treaty, but indicates our commitment to supporting all efforts, wherever they may take place and in whichever forum, towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We will, of course, continue to oppose any other attempts to incorporate NPT theology in other draft resolutions, unless they are in a similar context.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29 proposes a mechanism and a methodology towards that end, and calls on the Conference on Disarmament to take urgent action on what could be its greatest achievement or its greatest failure: the establishment on a priority basis of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations in 1998 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a nuclear weapons convention. To emphasize the seriousness of the sponsors, these draft resolutions call the attention of the General Assembly to the 28-nation proposal for a time-bound programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons and to the mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament proposed by 26 delegations in the Conference on Disarmament, and urges the Conference on Disarmament to use them and other inputs in their consideration of the subject in the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The third draft resolution in this sub-cluster proposes a convention on non-use or threat of use: a major step towards the ultimate goal. This — the idea of the elimination of nuclear weapons — is an idea whose time has come. Governments, non-governmental organizations and even some think tanks closely associated with the military establishments in nuclear-weapon States are questioning the relevance of nuclear weapons today. The call for the elimination of nuclear weapons is now almost universal. Thinking has started on the security requirements of States in a nuclear-weapon-free world. If the Conference on Disarmament cannot and if the nuclear-weapon States and their allies will not respond to this truly overwhelming call, international security will remain fragile and agreements composed of partial or unequal steps tenuous.

This applies not only to the NPT, as we have had occasion to hear from some NPT members, but also to the steps some NPT States have taken to protect themselves against nuclear weapons through the establishment of

nuclear-weapon-free zones and through calls for security assurances. In our view, both these concepts flow from an acceptance of an unequal nuclear regime. The world is a nuclear-weapon zone for the five nuclear-weapon States and their allies; the rest are to seek protection from these countries, hoping that the national security interests of the weapons Powers will not encourage them to use their dreadful weapons on countries which do not have them. India has no objection to groups of countries freely deciding among themselves to abjure nuclear weapons, if they decide it is in their security interest to do so, but we do not believe in such assurances, even if given in a legal form, so long as the weapons themselves continue to exist. We do not see nuclear-weapon-free zones as an answer to the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are a global menace: they do not respect territorial or regional boundaries. Partial measures such as nuclear-weapon-free zones only give the impression of progress, which is undermined by the global reach and deployment of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

India, however, respects the arrangements which have been freely arrived at by countries of a given region in keeping with guidelines endorsed by the United Nations, and hence will not oppose draft resolutions which reflect this situation. On the other hand, we will not support the imposition of this solution, and we do not believe in it. Our votes on the various draft resolutions on this subject will reflect this position.

Finally, in this cluster there are draft resolutions which use the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as their central platform. Our position on these draft resolutions will naturally be influenced by our views on the NPT, which I stated earlier in this intervention. Suffice it to say now that India will oppose any attempts to give the legitimacy of customary international law to the NPT through General Assembly resolutions, and we will also oppose any calls on countries to adhere to this or any other unequal treaty which we believe serves only to perpetuate and legitimize the retention of nuclear weapons by a handful of States in perpetuity.

Our goal, and the goal of with many other countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other developing countries, is to work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, a goal which is promoted not by attempts to control countries which do not have these weapons, but by efforts directed at the weapons themselves. The draft resolutions in documents A/C.1/52/L.15, L.29 and L.37, therefore, we believe, address the real issue and will attract, we hope, the widest possible support.

Mr. Mallam Daouda (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to speak on a number of draft resolutions before the Committee. The Republic of Niger favours all draft decisions and draft resolutions intended to contribute to general and complete disarmament and to the maintenance of international peace and security. Specifically, my country supports and wishes to join in sponsoring the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.8 on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them, for Niger, Mali and many other African and other countries, along with the United Nations, are uniting their efforts to curb the illicit traffic in small arms; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.27 on collecting and curbing small arms; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.1, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which was agreed upon at Oslo in September and which is to be signed at Ottawa on 3 December 1997; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 on the question of anti-personnel landmines in the context of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.28/Rev.1 on nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.25/Rev.1 on prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.2 on transparency in armaments, on which Niger supports the Arab Republic of Egypt, which took the initiative on this draft resolution recognizing that the principle of transparency should also apply to weapons of mass destruction and to transfers of high technology with military applications; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.33/Rev.1 on compliance with arms limitation, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.39 on regional disarmament, because regional disarmament efforts complement those aimed at achieving global disarmament; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.43 on transparency in armaments; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.18 on consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures; draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.37 on the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons; and draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.24 on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

To conclude, I would add that the delegation of Niger encourages the United Nations and all peace-loving and justice-loving States to continue their work for the cause of disarmament.

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is the initiator of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.17, on the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and a sponsor of four others on the elimination of nuclear weapons: draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.15, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons"; A/C.1/52/L.29, "Nuclear disarmament"; A/C.1/52/L.35, "The nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas"; and A/C.1/52/L.37, "Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons".

We consider that circumstances today combine to favour the elimination of nuclear weapons, since the end of the cold war has also meant the end of any kind of rationale for the nuclear arms race. Doctrines of deterrence have lost their very foundation — a known enemy and credibility. Moreover, new concerns have been added to the nightmare of the annihilation of the human species.

The transition from a confrontational bipolar order to a new order of global cooperation and interdependence would be impeded if a handful of States insisted on maintaining indefinitely arsenals whose sole apparent purpose was to ensure independence, autonomy, invulnerability, influence and international prestige for those States, and only them. The non-proliferation system would not survive such a claim; nor could a cooperative order be guaranteed in a situation of nuclear proliferation.

As is traditional in this Committee, Mexico is introducing draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.17 on the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty's opening for signature and the continued process of ratification allow us to confirm that the denuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean has very nearly been completed, thus contributing to the strengthening of regional peace and stability.

The delegation of Brazil and the group of sponsors supporting draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35 carried out a commendable exercise in transparency this year in the consultations on the nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Wide-ranging exchanges have taken place with the five nuclear-weapon States, the European Union and many delegations of members of the Non-Aligned Movement, so that all had an opportunity to express their points of view and make suggestions. The outcome of the consultations can be seen in the contents of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35. *Inter alia*, we wish to draw attention to the reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the emphasis on the machinery for cooperation between the parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba. We hope that this initiative receives the broad support it deserves.

Our sponsorship of the Indian initiative to negotiate multilaterally a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, as put forward in draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.15, is part and parcel of our belief that we must move forward by stages in the process of nuclear disarmament until such weapons are entirely eliminated. The prohibition of their use has taken on new meaning in the light of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*.

The delegation of Mexico would like the Committee to note our recognition of the delegation of Malaysia for having conducted intensive and fruitful consultations on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.37. We hope that the agreements reached between the sponsors and interested delegations will result in greater support for this initiative.

Aware of the obligation established by the International Court of Justice to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, we welcome new operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.37, in which the General Assembly would request all States to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken on the implementation of this resolution and nuclear disarmament.

We are again sponsoring what is this year draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.29, submitted by the delegation of Myanmar. We consider it essential and of the highest priority to deal multilaterally with the subject of nuclear disarmament, adopting a step-by-step approach in which the necessary unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures are taken. While we understand that the adoption of effective measures to eliminate nuclear weapons must result from bilateral understandings or understandings reached between nuclear-weapon States, we regard it as unacceptable that nuclear disarmament should be dealt with only by the nuclear-weapon States, as the threat of nuclear holocaust hangs over all humankind.

Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

We believe that the proposed programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons and the proposal to give a negotiating mandate to an ad hoc committee on nuclear

disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, put forward by many delegations of members of the Group of 21 in Geneva, are adequate to allow multilateral negotiations on this matter to begin, as they would be part of a gradual process with a clear purpose — the elimination of nuclear weapons. In particular, the proposed negotiating mandate takes into consideration the concerns of all States, which should make it possible to overcome the refusal of some delegations to deal with nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament — a refusal to deal multilaterally with an issue of multilateral interest.

The imperative need to make progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons must take these initiatives into account. That does not exclude other proposals made in recent months, such as the report of the Canberra Commission, the model convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons prepared by the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, and the possibility of reactivating, in a manner consistent with today's circumstances, the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States held in 1968.

I should now like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.16, entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme". We felt it would be a good idea to submit this draft resolution this year, with particular emphasis on *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*.

Despite the fact that last year we adopted resolution 51/46 A, which emphasized the importance of this programme as a valuable means for facilitating the full participation of developing countries in the deliberations and negotiations on disarmament in various United Nations bodies, we were unpleasantly surprised to find, at the beginning of this Committee's work this year, that the 1996 Disarmament Yearbook had not been published, although fortunately it has now been distributed.

There can be no doubt that the financial crisis in our Organization had an influence on this delay. However, the information, education and publicity activities undertaken by the United Nations in the field of disarmament are important and have their own priority in the implementation of the mandates granted by Member States.

We are aware that the support for such activities from the Voluntary Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme has declined, from $39,210 in voluntary contributions in 1996 to $26,135 in 1997. We call upon all Member States to contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund so as to support the Disarmament Information Programme, in the hope that next year we will have our Disarmament Yearbook early enough for it to help in the work in the First Committee. We should like to thank the Secretary-General for his support for the publication of the Yearbook, and we request that he continue to support its publication and distribution in a timely manner.

Mr. Díaz-Pereira (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Paraguay, in its capacity as coordinator of the Rio Group for this year, has the honour of making a statement, on behalf of the countries of the Group, on the draft resolution [A/C.1/52/L.17] on the consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco).

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — was negotiated in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly contained in resolution 1911 (XVIII) of 27 November 1963. Now, thirty years after the Treaty was concluded in Mexico City, the Rio Group is pleased to note that 32 States are parties to it.

We are also gratified that the region has been consolidated as the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and we hope that the experience of Latin America, as examined at the international seminar entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free zones in the next century", held in Mexico City on 13 and 14 February 1997, will be utilized in the process of consolidating the denuclearized regimes in other parts of the planet.

The Rio Group would like to take this opportunity to recall that this Treaty was adopted in the middle of the cold war, and the wishes and aspirations of the States of Latin America at that time are nowhere better reflected than in the first preambular paragraph of the Treaty. This expresses their intention

> "to contribute, so far as lies in their power, towards ending the armaments race, especially in the field of nuclear weapons, and towards strengthening a world at peace, based on the sovereign equality of States, mutual respect and good-neighbourliness".

This important step taken by our region towards achieving the military denuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean has become an important milestone in the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones. It is also worth emphasizing the clear demonstration of the

peace-loving aspirations of Latin America and the Caribbean that is reflected in the very name of the instrument. Indeed, the declaration of the illegality of nuclear weapons in the region is emphatically conveyed by the word "prohibition".

Another aspect that should be pointed out is the fact that this decision does not permit exceptions of any kind, and Article 27 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco categorically rejects the possibility that the Treaty should be subject to any reservations. However, it should be understood that the Treaty does not diminish the right of States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as this can contribute to their economic development and social progress.

With Saint Kitts and Nevis acceding to the Treaty, and with the recent ratification by Guatemala, Venezuela, Barbados and my country of the amendments to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we are able to observe the steady consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty.

I should like to conclude this statement by indicating that these achievements are not an end in themselves, but rather a means of enabling humankind rapidly to attain general and complete disarmament.

The Acting Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.34.

Mr. Čalovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States, contained in document A/C.1/52/L.34 of 30 October 1997, on behalf of the following delegations: Austria, Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The draft resolution is a continuation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth and fiftieth sessions on the same subject. It takes into account developments in the Balkans since the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The main purpose of this draft resolution is to ask the General Assembly to support and promote a policy and activities in favour of peace, stability, security, cooperation, sustainable economic development of the Balkans and speedy integration of the region into European structures, initially the European Union. The development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States is considered to be the most important vehicle to advance the region in that direction.

At present, as the Committee is aware, the Balkans is still going through a very difficult period. It is very important, therefore, that the international community help the forces of peace and progress to overcome the forces of war, confrontation and retrogression. In the past, we had too many wars and conflicts in the Balkans. It is of the utmost importance to prevent the occurrence of new ones. That is also a very important objective of this draft resolution. In the future, the Balkans should become a region of cooperation and sustainable economic development. It has all the resources and potential to become a highly developed region. The important goal of this resolution, therefore, is to influence developments in that direction.

The draft resolution advocates implementation of the Dayton General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in that connection, calls for active participation in and support of the negotiations as foreseen in the annex to the Agreement. It urges the normalization of relations among all States of the Balkan region and affirms the need for strict compliance with the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity or political independence, the inviolability of international borders and non-intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

Very importantly, the draft resolution advocates support for the Pact of Stability in Europe, adopted in Paris on 21 March 1995, the Process of Stability and Good-Neighbourliness in South East Europe — the so-called Royaumdont Initiative — the South-East European Cooperative Initiative and the activities of the Central European Initiative, as well as for the inter-Balkan process initiated by the Sofia Declaration of July 1996 and further enhanced by the Thessaloniki Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans.

Further, it stresses the importance of good-neighbourliness and the development of friendly relations among States for the promotion of international cooperation and for the solution of problems among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

A few days ago a very important event for the Balkans took place in Greece. On the island of Crete, on 3 and 4 November 1997, a summit of heads of State and Government of the countries of south-eastern Europe was held. The Summit adopted an important Joint Statement in which the aspirations of all Balkan States were emphasized.

The Joint Statement stressed that the European orientation of the Balkan countries is an integral part of their political, economic and social development and that they aspire to transform the region into an area of cooperation and economic prosperity and, to that effect, to promote good-neighbourly relations and respect for international law.

In a word, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.34 would like to see the Balkans become a region of peace, cooperation and development, not a region of difficulties and stagnation. That is the main thrust of the draft resolution.

May I emphasize that both preambular and operative paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.34 are clearly spelled out and need no detailed explanation.

As a result of the recent consultations held to finalize the text of the draft resolution, the sponsors have agreed to make the following oral amendments.

It is proposed to insert a new preambular paragraph as the sixth, reading as follows:

> "Emphasizing the importance of the results of the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of countries of South-Eastern Europe, held on Crete, Greece, on 3 and 4 November 1997, for the peace, security, good-neighbourliness, stability and prosperity of the region".

Operative paragraph 4 will read as follows:

> "Also calls upon all Balkan States and interested States outside the region to participate actively in and support the negotiations foreseen in annex 1 B article V, of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a view to reaching early results".

Before concluding my introductory statement, I wish to thank very warmly many delegations for their support during the process of drafting the draft resolution and, in particular, the delegations of the countries which have joined in sponsoring it. I hope that the proposed draft resolution will meet with the approval of the Committee and that it will be adopted without a vote.

Adoption of this draft resolution of hope for the Balkans will be important and good news for my country and for our region.

Mr. Sorreta (Philippines): Myanmar has once again presented a comprehensive framework within which we as an Organization can move towards establishing a world free from nuclear weapons. The Philippines fully supports the draft resolution.

With all due respect, judging by the votes on the draft resolution last year it looks as though there are some who are more fearful of the draft resolution than they are of the continued existence of nuclear weapons, but perhaps this characterization is unfair and insensitive and I beg forgiveness.

That being said, the Myanmar draft resolution, within the current context, is a balanced one. It may not be practical for some, but it could be a starting point for many.

All of the more emphatic objections to involving the rest of the world in nuclear disarmament that we hear in the corridors, and the occasional impassioned statements in more formal surroundings, are that nuclear disarmament is best left to those possessing those weapons. This is an argument of exclusivity and would perhaps be logical only if it did not exclude the rest of the world that not only is held in virtual terror and insecurity, but would also be the helpless victim of these terrible weapons.

Mr. Pearson (New Zealand): New Zealand is pleased to support the draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.35, introduced by the delegation of Brazil. New Zealand has worked closely with Brazil and other core-group countries in developing the text of the draft resolution this year. I would like to take the opportunity to outline the thinking behind the draft resolution.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones have made considerable advances in recent times. There is also recognition that they contribute to international security and confidence-building. They have widespread support, both from regional States and from the nuclear-weapon States. There is scope to develop political cooperation between the zones and to have that concept endorsed by the wider international community.

This year's text has been modified. Let me make it clear that this draft resolution does not extend or undermine international law. It does not challenge the provisions of international maritime law or the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Nor does it attempt to pre-empt the outcome of negotiations between one zone and the nuclear-weapon States. Finally, this draft resolution does not seek to burden the Secretariat with responsibility for follow-up action. It is up to members of the zones ourselves to carry forward the desire for political cooperation.

In this way, it is a useful model for others to consider carefully, since it lays responsibility on concerned Member States, and not, as has become too frequent, on the United Nations. I encourage all delegations to give favourable consideration to a draft resolution that has relevance to all States.

The Chairman: The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.40.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): On behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Benin, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, Portugal, Spain, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.40, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels".

The problems posed by conventional weapons must be dealt with at the global and regional levels, both in their quantitative and in their qualitative aspects.

If war originates in the minds of men, most arms races, especially in the conventional field, are the result of problems, disputes and political competition in various regions and subregions of the world. This is more so now after the end of the cold war. This is recognized in the third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

A conscious endeavour is required to ensure against the creation of serious arms imbalances in various regions and subregions of the world, which can threaten security and stability. This can happen if some regional States resort to the large-scale acquisition or production of armaments while other States in the region are denied the ability to match such acquisitions. A grave arms imbalance can encourage aggression against weaker States. It can create compulsions for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These concepts are covered by the fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution.

In this context, the draft takes note of the various initiatives taken in various parts of the world, including Latin America and South Asia, for conventional arms control and recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

The draft resolution, in the seventh preambular paragraph repeats the belief that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting regional agreements and also affirms, in the next paragraph, the objective of preventing the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and avoiding aggression.

In the operative part, the draft resolution in A/C.1/52/L.40 once again decides to give urgent consideration to the issue of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. It also repeats the request to the Conference on Disarmament, as a first step, to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements. We are disappointed that during the last two years, the Conference on Disarmament has not found it possible to establish a mechanism to undertake the task of preparing the principles and framework, as requested by the General Assembly. We believe this exercise is the right way in which the Conference on Disarmament could contribute in a practical way to promoting conventional arms control and regional and international peace and security. The sponsors strongly express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will find it possible to commence its work on this subject early in 1998 and submit a report to the next session of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the sponsors of A/C.1/52/L.40, we express the hope that this draft resolution will be adopted with the widest possible support.

My delegation will also have the opportunity to introduce another draft resolution, the one contained A/C.1/52/L.42, entitled "Role of the United Nations in disarmament", hopefully next week. This draft resolution, I wish to state at this moment, is not related directly to the United Nations reform process. It merely seeks a reaffirmation of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We believe that this reaffirmation is required at this phase in the post-cold-war era.

Consultations are under way, and there may be some modifications to the provisions of A/C.1/52/L.42, which we will bring to the attention of the Committee early next week.

May I also take this opportunity to express our strong support for the draft resolution in document A/C.1/52/L.29, which has just been introduced by the representative of Myanmar. This draft resolution, in our opinion, embodies the most important decision that is to be taken by the First Committee and the General Assembly in the field of disarmament during its current session. The objective of achieving nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons must continue to be given the highest priority by the international community, as provided for in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

My delegation has had the opportunity to underline the grave and serious developments that have recently taken place in the field of the development of nuclear weapons and the evolution of nuclear doctrine, which gave rise to the danger of the use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear-weapon States.

May I also take this opportunity to express some of our concerns with regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.28 which is entitled "Nuclear disarmament" with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons but which, in our view, falls seriously short of the objectives to which it is aspiring.

It is a matter of concern that this draft resolution does not refer to the significant changes that have taken place in nuclear-weapons doctrines or to developments since the end of the cold war, nor does it express concern at the statements by some nuclear-weapons States that they will continue to retain nuclear weapons indefinitely, nor at the danger of the use of nuclear weapons, including use against non-nuclear-weapon States.

On the contrary, the draft resolution in document A/C.1/52/L.28 instead focuses its attention on non-proliferation, and in its very first operative paragraph calls for ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), rather than calling for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. This is a distorted priority, and it is to rectify these priorities that my delegation will be suggesting some modifications to that draft resolution.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation has asked for the floor to express its position on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.29, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", of which my country is a sponsor.

My delegation has always supported all efforts made to achieve the praiseworthy objective of nuclear disarmament. In sponsoring this resolution for the third consecutive year, the delegation of Algeria again wishes to manifest its support for such efforts. It feels itself duty-bound to do so, especially under the present circumstances, marked *inter alia* by the end of the East-West confrontation which, in our view, should bring with it a whole series of measures for the advent of a world that is safer for all, where security would no longer be conceived of in selective terms.

Through this draft resolution, the sponsors have endeavoured to reflect a desire that has long been expressed, that of nuclear disarmament, from a viewpoint that has been renewed by the new impetus brought about by the end of the cold war as well as a whole series of developments that I would like to recall very briefly.

First of all, in May 1995 our respective countries indefinitely extended the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), despite all the criticism this major legal instrument of disarmament has given and continues to give rise to because of its inherent imperfections. Despite modest results, the first session of the Preparatory Commission for the Year 2000 Review Conference of the NPT makes it possible to contemplate a second session which we hope will take place under better auspices.

Next, I should mention the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by more than 148 States, and lastly the Advisory Opinion handed down on 8 July 1996 by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the *Illegality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, which reaffirmed unanimously that there exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

These three elements, namely, the prolongation of the NPT and its indefinite extension, the signing of the CTBT and the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ, have strengthened our conviction of the rightness of our attachment to the cause

of nuclear disarmament through the elimination of all nuclear weapons according to a precise time-frame.

In joining the sponsors of this initiative, Algeria, which was also among the group of 28 delegations which proposed an action programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons to the Conference on Disarmament, thus shares the perception of nuclear disarmament reflected by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the eleventh summit in Cartagena, a position which was recalled by the NAM Ministerial Conference in New Delhi in April 1997 and more recently reaffirmed at the meeting in New York in September 1997 in parallel with the fifty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Our sponsorship of this draft thus reflects our perception of nuclear disarmament, which must be universal in its scope and non-discriminatory in its effects; a nuclear disarmament that would free all the formidable resources accumulated to this end to promote rights, including the fundamental right to life and existence without fear of all human beings wherever they live; a nuclear disarmament conceived as a milestone in the process of fostering collective, non-exclusive security in order to arrive at a world free of nuclear weapons, as it was before 1945. Was this not the objective our Organization set itself when it devoted its first resolution to nuclear disarmament? Was this not the objective we all collectively reiterated in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament?

For all these reasons, my delegation invites all delegations to give the widest possible support to this important draft.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Australia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): On behalf of its 32 sponsors, I wish to introduce the draft resolution which appears in document A/C.1/52/L.23, whose correct title should read "Contributions towards banning anti-personnel landmines".

There are three draft resolutions on landmines before the Committee this year, where there was only one at our previous session. We have before us draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.1 dealing with the Ottawa treaty process, draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22 dealing with the Inhumane Weapons Convention, and draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 urging the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its efforts on landmines.

The reason for the proliferation of draft resolutions this year, as I understand it, is the fact that the sponsors of the various draft resolutions wished to put forward "single-issue" resolutions. As a result, there are few cross-references in the three draft resolutions to activity on landmines in forums other than that covered by the particular draft resolution.

We respect the wishes of the authors of draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.1 and A/C.1/52/L.22 to have single-issue resolutions, and with the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/52/L.23 have followed their example by presenting a text that focuses solely on possible work on landmines in the Conference on Disarmament.

That is not to say that the three draft resolutions are in any way in competition with each other. On the contrary, their complementarity is evidenced by the fact that several countries have sponsored all three draft resolutions, and the indications are that a clear majority of delegations will also support all three drafts. Australia, for its part, will support all three draft resolutions and currently has instructions to sponsor and has sponsored two of those draft resolutions.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 also allows those countries that are not able at this time to commit themselves to the Ottawa Convention to indicate their support for action which would contribute to the Convention's objectives.

The draft resolution is brief, it is focused and it is non-contentious. In its operative paragraphs it urges all States to intensify their efforts to contribute to the objective of the elimination of anti-personnel landmines; it welcomes the various bans, moratoriums and other restrictions already declared by States, and calls upon States that have not yet done so to declare and implement such bans; and it invites the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its efforts on the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

We believe that this expresses the wish of a majority of delegations for landmines issues to be pursued by effective cooperation in the Conference on Disarmament, as long as that activity is compatible with and in support of activities undertaken in other forums, such as the Ottawa process and the inhumane weapons Convention. It is our view that we should seek every opportunity in every forum to address the issue of landmines, in the hope that by our concerted and combined efforts we will realize the ultimate humanitarian objective we all share: to bring an end to the

dreadful suffering those mines wreak on their innocent victims.

Mr. Mernier (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Belgium is a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23, which has just been introduced by Ambassador Campbell of Australia. As everyone knows, my country has long been committed to the struggle against the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. That commitment was particularly firm and active during the Ottawa process, whose remarkable results we salute.

From the outset, however, our position concerning forums has been clear. We have always refrained from entering into sterile debates that might set one forum against another. In that spirit, we would like to see the Conference on Disarmament put landmines on its agenda so as to involve gradually in a complete prohibition of anti-personnel landmines those countries that for the time being find themselves unable to adhere to that objective. That is the purpose of Belgium's sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): I should like to refer to the draft resolution just introduced by our Australian colleague, Ambassador Campbell.

Since last year's General Assembly resolution on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines, the issue of anti-personnel landmines has been the subject of active discussion and concrete work. The Government of Finland shares the goals set forth in that resolution and is ready to make its contribution to the objective of the worldwide elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

At this year's session of the First Committee, Finland is a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 on anti-personnel landmines. Finland has been actively participating in the preparation of that draft resolution. Through the draft resolution, we seek to endorse a broad international consensus in support of the objective of the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines and the continuation of the work that the Conference on Disarmament, for its part, could accomplish in trying to achieve a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, the draft resolution does not spell out what the Conference could do on this issue, since the Conference itself has to define its programme of work in accordance with its own procedures, and further consultations would have to take place on this question. However, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament has an important role to play, and Finland will act vigorously to start concrete work in the Conference on Disarmament in January 1998.

As our Australian colleague noted, draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 is a result of intensive consultations. The draft resolution is sponsored both by a number of countries committed to the Ottawa process and by other countries sharing the objective of a total ban. But it is particularly important that a number of key countries that have not yet been involved in the work on a total ban have now indicated readiness to support this draft resolution.

The draft resolution complements another draft resolution on anti-personnel landmines sponsored by Canada and many other countries in pursuit of the objective of a total ban. It does not conflict with that draft resolution dealing with the Ottawa Convention, and this is underlined by the fact that a number of countries strongly committed to the Ottawa process are, with us, sponsoring the Australian-led draft resolution.

We hope that all countries will be able to support draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 and that it could be adopted, if possible, without a vote.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): I shall be speaking first on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.5. That draft resolution, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", which is before the Committee, is nothing but a transparent political move to single out and to condemn Israel.

The draft resolution does not have the cause of non-proliferation at heart, as its sponsors falsely claim. As a matter of fact, it renders a great disservice to the cause of non-proliferation in the Middle East by diverting attention from true risks to non-proliferation in the region.

The adoption each year by this Committee of such a draft resolution, together with other condemnatory draft resolutions that intend to put pressure on my country, does not create of itself, as its sponsors tend to believe, political realities in the Middle East. Political realities are taking shape outside this conference room, elsewhere in the region.

The sponsors of the draft resolution, who represent themselves, in the language of the draft resolution, as proponents of "universal adherence to the Treaty", make cynical use of this principle as they single out not only one region but one State. If this draft resolution addresses itself to the principle of universality, it should be broadly

applied. If, on the other hand, the sponsors wish to highlight the current regional situation in the Middle East, they should take a comprehensive approach, encompassing all security problems in the region.

The real proliferators in the Middle East are well known to the Security Council, to this Committee and to the international community as a whole. They should be called upon to fulfil their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other legally binding international instruments to which they have freely become parties. Unfortunately, their mere signature on these instruments does not provide assurances of compliance.

It is a sad irony that this draft resolution has become a topic of our discussion here at a time when United Nations inspectors face insurmountable difficulties in trying to move an entrenched and defiant regime to reveal the nuclear capabilities it has developed and acquired in violation of its obligations under the NPT.

As long as this Committee does not address itself to the real risks of proliferation in the Middle East, it will remain irrelevant to the evolving situation in the region.

As much as Israel welcomes the indefinite extension of the NPT, Israel does not find in the Treaty an adequate response to its security problems and regional concerns in the Middle East.

Israel's attitude towards the NPT has become, unjustifiably, a major subject of criticism in annual resolutions. No other United Nations Member State, including those that for national security reasons found it impossible to become parties to the NPT, has ever been subject to repeated condemnatory resolutions regarding the question of its treaty membership.

There is no place for criticism of Israel based on external perceptions of Israel's political and security situation or on subjective national experiences and lessons learned in other regions.

Another draft resolution before this Committee, draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", already covers all relevant topics of principle pertaining to the nuclear issue. This, in itself, renders draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.5 superfluous and redundant. There is, therefore, no need for this draft resolution. Obviously, its only remaining objective is to single out and condemn Israel, with complete disregard for events in the region.

It is widely accepted that resolutions dealing with international or regional security adopted by international forums are of value only when adopted by consensus — the more so when dealing with nuclear issues. Their adoption by a majority vote renders them unrealistic and ineffective. Another negative consequence of such a majority vote is the creation of an illusion that resolutions are a proper replacement for direct and free negotiations among the concerned parties.

I once again call upon all delegations to resist this annual temptation to engage in ritual demonstration of their support of the NPT by joining in condemnation of Israel in this Committee.

May I take this opportunity to draw attention to document A/C.1/52/L.46, which contains an amendment presented by my delegation to draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4. This amendment is introduced with a view to enabling us to maintain consensus on an important resolution and topic which has already been with us for many years.

Mr. Soutar (United Kingdom): I would like to speak briefly in support of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23, of which we are a sponsor, and which has just been introduced by the representative of Australia.

My Government is fully committed to the aim of a comprehensive global ban on anti-personnel landmines. With this in mind, we took part in the Oslo Diplomatic Conference, which adopted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and we look forward to signing the Convention in Ottawa in December.

As is well known, there are many countries that do not find it possible to join in the Ottawa treaty process. However, many of them also genuinely wish to address the issues raised by these conventional weapons of mass destruction. We should encourage them in this.

For this reason, we also endorse action on anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that this draft resolution will facilitate such action, and therefore call on all countries that share our concern at the destruction of human life being caused by landmines to support this draft resolution.

Ms. Bourgois (France): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming your important post.

My statement today will deal with anti-personnel landmines. This painful subject is undoubtedly one of the predominant issues before the Committee over which you are presiding this year, one in which our work will impact on world public opinion.

Yesterday Canada introduced draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.1, which calls upon all States to sign the landmines Convention that will be signed in Ottawa in a few weeks. France co-sponsored this draft resolution, with about 120 other countries. It will sign the Convention in Ottawa on 3 December and then will immediately begin the ratification process.

The Convention on the complete prohibition of anti-personnel landmines adopted in Oslo carries with it great hopes. It was born of the horror felt by the international community regarding a scourge that, with inexorable regularity, kills or mutilates every 20 minutes. It responds to the urgent need to do everything possible to ensure that these weapons, which most often strike civilians — children in particular — claim no more victims and stop causing untold suffering.

Through its implied commitments to provide assistance and rehabilitation, the Convention offers the prospect of a better future to all those who have lived in uncertainty and jeopardy. In particular, the commitments to mine clearance should lead to greater tranquillity in the daily life of the most affected regions and thus promote their development.

For all these reasons, France, which for a number of years has made the fight against such weapons one of its priorities, made sure in Oslo — along with many other countries, and guided by the remarkable presidency of the Ambassador of South Africa, Jacob Selebi — that the Convention provides for a complete prohibition, without exception.

To accept half-measures would be to tolerate the perpetuation of evils that we all wish to do away with. That is why my country and many others have opted, like Canada, for a treaty that places above all else the protection of human life. This is what is at stake.

An ambitious undertaking will be fulfilled in Ottawa. We will need to support the dynamic of accession, which we are already seeing in order to achieve universality for this new humanitarian standard.

We must, however, look reality squarely in the face. What is it? If we consider the past, we note with consternation that the ratification process of revised Protocol II of the 1990 Convention has been at a standstill since the vast movement towards Ottawa began. France, which was an instigator of that revision and is in the process of ratifying that document, would deplore any neglect of an instrument which, howsoever inadequate, could considerably mitigate the risks of the indiscriminate use of mines. That is one of the reasons why my country is also a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22, introduced by Sweden, in accordance with the appeal made in the Ottawa text.

Moreover, when we look to the future, we must recognize that certain States will not be in a position to join this vast Ottawa movement in the foreseeable future. They have their own reasons for this, which we must respect.

We are duty-bound to continue the struggle against anti-personnel landmines by proposing a close and constructive dialogue to countries which, while unable to sign the Ottawa treaty, nevertheless recognize the reality of this scourge and are ready to assume their responsibility. The Conference on Disarmament is clearly the forum in which such dialogue should take place. Its scope will, of course, be more modest than that of the Ottawa treaty. If the work can be begun, any progress made would nevertheless constitute a new victory in the common struggle. It is an opportunity which we must seize if we are to further reduce the number of victims.

That is why my country, through its cosponsorship, fully supports draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23, submitted by Australia, which invites the Conference on Disarmament to work on this subject.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I have great pleasure in introducing the draft resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East", contained in document A/C.1/52/L.4.

As is well known, this resolution has been annually adopted by the General Assembly since its inception and introduction in 1974 and by consensus since 1980. The consensus that has emerged in the General Assembly over this long period of time with respect to this proposal and the steadfast support it received in bilateral declarations and in various multilateral forums are no doubt clear testimony to the viability and relevance of this concept in the Middle East.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would greatly contribute to arresting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening the security of all States of the region. Consequently, it would be deemed an important confidence-building measure towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

During the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the study on effective and verifiable measures to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was presented for the consideration of this Committee. The study was generally well received as a useful and balanced approach to attaining an extremely important objective. In quoting this study, I would refer to its conclusions, where it is stated that

> "There ... is no doubt that the goal can be reached; it is not an idle dream". [A/45/435, para. 175]

It goes on to state that

> "The effort required will be great, but so will the benefits of success". [ibid., para. 176]

Though we fully realize that peace and security, as well as stability, in the region of the Middle East will be achieved only when a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its dimensions is attained, it is essential to create the necessary climate and security conditions based on equal security for all, security at the lowest level of armament, and security that would not allow for the military superiority of any individual party. All this might facilitate the achievement of this objective. In our view, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would greatly contribute in this regard.

In introducing the draft resolution, I find it of significance to state that my delegation, while fully aware of the common desire of all concerned to preserve the consensual dimension of this draft resolution, found it essential to reflect the relevant and non-controversial regional realities of which all parties directly concerned are fully conscious and aware. In this vein, and in order to be consistent with ourselves, operative paragraph 4 refers to the importance of the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security in promoting mutual confidence and security in the Middle East. The only change which has been introduced here relates to the deletion of the words "activities of", which appeared in previous resolutions just before the reference to the Working Group. This is only a reflection of realities. The activities of the Working Group have been halted for over three years now. And, as many have noted, including the representative of Israel, who said in a statement in the general debate of this Committee:

> "We regret that the promising discussions and activities of this Working Group have been brought to a halt". [see A/C.1/52/PV.10]

It is our considered opinion that the time is now ripe to proceed towards the implementation of the provisions and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. For this reason, operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution endeavours once again to utilize the good offices of the Secretary-General to inject the required impetus into the process. It would seem timely today that we seriously embark on laying the solid foundations on which to proceed. In this regard, the same operative paragraph requests the Secretary-General to actively — I repeat, actively — pursue his consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States.

The *raison d'être* for envisaging such an active role for the Secretary-General is consonant with and builds upon his ongoing and long-lasting endeavours, exerted over a lengthy period of time. This kind of revitalized and active role for the Secretary-General serves our cause well.

I would also like to invite the Committee's attention to the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 9, in which reference is made to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It is a broader initiative, which not only highlights the nuclear factor but adds to it the chemical as well as the biological weapons dimensions. This initiative, may I state, departs from the genesis of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.4 and it does so by broadening the concept and scope of the prohibition to include the chemical and biological dimensions.

Since the announcement of this initiative by President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt on 9 April 1990, it has been attracting an ever widening degree of support. The Security Council adopted resolution 687 (1991) on 8 April 1991, which reiterates the need to work towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

From a different angle, the League of Arab States has, for the past three years, established an active group of experts to elaborate the principles and provisions of a draft

treaty on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East. It is our sincere hope that the States of the Middle East will work towards the implementation of both proposals simultaneously, in order to eliminate the shadow of suspicion and mistrust.

Finally, I commend to the First Committee this draft resolution in the hope that it will receive the same support as have those of previous years and will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the United States to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.32.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): On behalf of the Russian Federation and the United States, as well as 42 additional sponsors, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.32/Rev.1, entitled "Bilateral nuclear arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament".

This draft resolution places on record the recent positive developments in reducing the strategic nuclear-weapon arsenals of the Russian Federation and the United States and in strengthening the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Among other signs of progress since last year's resolution, draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.32/Rev.1 welcomes the March 1997 Helsinki understandings between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin. In that agreement, the two Presidents agreed that after the entry into force of START II, their two countries would immediately begin negotiations on a START III agreement, which would establish by 31 December 2007 lower aggregate levels of 2,000 to 2,500 strategic nuclear warheads and take measures relating to the transparency and destruction of strategic nuclear warheads, as well as delivery systems, and carry out other actions to promote the irreversibility of these deep reductions.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.32/Rev.1 also notes with satisfaction the various agreements on strategic offensive weapons signed by the United States and the Russian Federation in New York on 26 September 1997, which are intended to promote further the progress of still deeper reductions and limitations of strategic offensive arms. It also welcomes the agreements signed at the same time by those two countries, as well as by Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine, that contribute to ensuring the viability of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems.

The draft resolution recognizes that much work remains to be done in this field. It urges the United States and Russia to begin negotiations on a START III agreement immediately after START II enters into force and encourages them to continue to give the highest priority to their efforts to reduce their nuclear weapons. It also welcomes the reductions made by other nuclear-weapon States and encourages them to consider appropriate measures relating to nuclear disarmament. In this way, the draft resolution provides further impetus to the nuclear-weapon States to continue meeting their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.32/Rev.1 contains a record not of resolutions passed or studies agreed, but of substantial progress in nuclear disarmament. Through the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty we have abolished an entire class of nuclear weapons. The implementation of START I has led to rapid reductions of strategic offensive weapons, and the entry into force of START II, and then START III, will reduce Russian and American strategic weapons to still lower levels.

Anyone who wants concrete evidence of this progress can walk through the United Nations park just outside this building and take a look at the statue of Saint George slaying the dragon, a dragon in this case composed of cut-up pieces of real INF missiles, Pershing II's and SS-20's.

Russia and the United States take pride in this record of accomplishment. The bilateral negotiating forum has shown that it works effectively. We have already decided on the shape of the table and the working languages. We have learned to put aside extraneous matters and to concentrate on reducing nuclear armaments. This approach has taken us to the eve of drastic reductions — up to 80 per cent of the cold-war total of our respective arms.

The authors of this draft resolution do not believe that satisfaction has lead to complacency, however. The Russian Federation and the United States have set themselves ambitious goals for the future. If they are implemented in START III, they will take still another significant step towards the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

We all have a vital interest in nuclear disarmament. Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.32/Rev.1 recognizes that interest and encourages it in a very practical way. It deserves the support of all members of the international community. On behalf of the Russian Federation and the United States, I ask for that unanimous support.

I would also like to speak in support of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23, entitled, "Anti-personnel landmines", which was introduced by Australia.

The United States is pleased to co-sponsor this draft resolution. We do so to encourage the idea of doing work on anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament to supplement and support the very useful work on this issue which has already been accomplished or is under way.

We believe that draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 provides a needed complement to the two anti-personnel-landmine draft resolutions already on the table here at the First Committee — a draft resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons amended Protocol II on landmines, and a draft resolution on the Ottawa Convention to be opened for signature next month. We wish to stress the word "complement". Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 is not in competition with other draft resolutions, nor would the Conference on Disarmament be in competition with other work already completed or under way elsewhere. That important work speaks for itself.

We have a common objective: to ban anti-personnel landmines. Steps in various forums can contribute to this objective. The anti-personnel-landmine problem can best be solved by synergistic action in various forums.

To demonstrate how draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23 complements the Ottawa draft resolution, it should be noted that A/C.1/52/L.23 has already brought on board a number of key States which would otherwise have no way to support a draft resolution calling for efforts to eliminating anti-personnel landmines. In the same vein, there are countries which are sponsoring or supporting both the Ottawa draft resolution and draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.23.

Getting all sides of this difficult but important issue on board would be a significant achievement. We hope all countries can support — and if possible, sponsor — draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I would like to speak now in support of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23, entitled "Anti-personnel landmines", which was introduced a few minutes ago by the representative of Australia.

Japan is pleased to be one of the original sponsors of the draft resolution in question. Japan has spared no effort to address the problems caused by anti-personnel landmines. We appreciate any contributions in this regard.

As I stated in the general debate, Japan attaches great importance to humanitarian activities in such areas as assistance to demining efforts, development of technology for mine detection and clearance and assistance for victims of landmines. On the basis of the Tokyo guidelines adopted at the Tokyo conference on anti-personnel landmines last March, Japan will continue its efforts in this field.

Concerning the legally binding controls and prohibitions, Japan has ratified the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Japan appreciates the Ottawa process and regards it as an important and remarkable achievement by the international community towards the banning of anti-personnel landmines.

At the same time, it is a fact that there remain a number of countries which cannot join the immediate total ban on anti-personnel landmines, at least at this stage. Therefore, Japan is convinced that the international community must continue its efforts towards a total ban. In this context, it is our view that the Conference on Disarmament can make a significant contribution in this area because it has both the participation of key countries and the expertise and negotiating experience to forge a treaty which takes into account each country's security concerns, as well as humanitarian concerns.

In short, my delegation understands that this draft resolution is in no way intended to undermine or compete with other efforts outside the Conference on Disarmament. Rather, this draft resolution is another attempt to contribute to the solution of the problem of anti-personnel landmines. With this belief, Japan supports this draft resolution and appeals to other countries to do so as well.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): I should like to speak in support of draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.1, L.22 and L.23.

Freeing the world of the scourge of anti-personnel mines is one of the top priorities of German foreign and disarmament policy. This is why Germany has actively participated in and is fully committed to the Ottawa process. We welcome the strong support that the draft resolution introduced by Canada, which we have co-sponsored together with more than 110 Member States, has received in the First Committee. This demonstrates that the Ottawa process is firmly on track and that the signing of the treaty at the beginning of next month in Ottawa will be a historic landmark in the struggle against anti-personnel landmines.

The Ottawa treaty will not, however, be the end of the process. Germany will vigorously continue its efforts towards an effective and universal ban of all forms of anti-personnel mines. We appeal to all countries not yet in a position to sign the Ottawa treaty to keep their position under review and to consider signing as soon as possible.

At the same time, Germany welcomes all other efforts to attain the ultimate goal shared by so many countries. We believe that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons remains a major contribution towards these efforts. Germany has ratified the amended Protocol II of that Convention and appeals to all nations to ratify it at the earliest possible date. We also support all unilateral, regional and multilateral efforts that contribute to relieving the untold human suffering created by this weapon in so many regions of the world. That is why Germany is also co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons introduced by Sweden. We also commend and thank Australia for its initiative to present a draft resolution that addresses the urgent problem of anti-personnel landmines.

The millions of landmines that are killing and maiming innocent victims every day are both a terrible legacy of the past and a huge challenge for the future. This dramatic humanitarian problem requires solidarity and joint action by the entire international community. This is why we have decided to co-sponsor also the Australian draft resolution.

Let us thus put aside institutional or procedural matters. Let us show the world, the victims and the millions of people who must still fear for life and limb that the international community, represented in this First Committee, can rise to the occasion and can speak with one voice by adopting all three draft resolutions, which address, with different but mutually reinforcing approaches, this terrible problem of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I should like to speak this afternoon on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.45 on the "Status of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Canada and Poland are pleased today to be in the position to present formally to the First Committee draft resolution L.45. I should like also at this point to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for its cooperation and patience as our efforts have evolved.

It is particularly important that the First Committee act on this topic in as positive a way as possible. As is well known, the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on 29 April of this year with 87 original States parties. In addition, 17 other States have subsequently become States parties, several of which have actually done so during this session of the First Committee. We consider it highly appropriate that this Committee welcome these facts and call upon all States that have not yet done so to also become States parties without delay.

Another significant development also took place this year: the successful launch in May of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Certainly, the First Committee should note this with satisfaction.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.45, which is currently being processed by the Secretariat, has been carefully prepared in extensive consultations between a representative number of States parties to the Convention. It reflects both delicate compromises among those delegations and, even more critically, a consensus among them. It recognizes a shared view of the value of the Convention and the vital importance of full and effective implementation of, and compliance with, all provisions of the Convention. Differences of substance, priority or emphasis concerning the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention remain to be addressed more comprehensively in the OPCW, in The Hague.

Against this background, Canada and Poland strongly hope that this draft resolution can and will be adopted without a vote. We urge all First Committee members, and States parties to the Convention in particular, not to make substantive interventions given the approach outlined earlier in this statement. The cooperation of all delegations in meeting this request would be deeply appreciated.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to make a brief statement on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.29, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", introduced today by the delegation of Myanmar.

We associate ourselves with the words of support for this draft resolution expressed by previous speakers. In the considered view of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Myanmar draft resolution is a timely initiative that addresses concisely the highest-priority issue on the disarmament agenda, namely, nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. It is also self-evident that the most effective guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is nuclear disarmament. The idea of the irrelevance of such weapons has taken on added momentum and a sense of urgency since the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in 1996. That landmark resolution, initiated for the first time during the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations by the delegation of Myanmar and other sponsors, provides a clear path towards the elimination of those horrendous weapons.

We sincerely hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament at the 1998 session of that body will respond constructively to the call contained in this draft resolution and establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, taking into account all relevant proposals, *inter alia*, the 1996 proposal of 28 members of the Conference on Disarmament for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

This draft resolution enjoys the support of a majority of Member States, and we therefore commend it to the First Committee. My delegation hopes for broader support for this draft resolution this year.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): I wish to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4*, where the asterisk apparently indicates that the document was reissued for technical reasons. This is not the case, and my delegation wishes to register its protest about a practice by which a significant change has been introduced to a draft resolution without its issuance as a revised text. Paragraph 4 of the original draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4 reads as follows:

> "Notes the importance of the ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations and the activities of the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security in promoting mutual confidence and security in the Middle East, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone".

In paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4* the words "the activities of" with regard to the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security are deleted.

At this advanced stage in the life of this draft resolution, Israel fails to see the rationale behind the proposed changes to the existing text as adopted by consensus in previous years. We would hesitate to guess that these repeated initiatives to amend the draft resolution are intended to make it more difficult each year for us to remain within the consensus. We cannot be part of this game, and we cannot be part of the consensus if the text of the draft resolution is to be eroded.

My delegation wishes therefore to move formally an amendment by which the words "the activities of" would be restored to paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4*. I shall provide this amendment in writing.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): I wanted to comment immediately on what has just been raised by the representative of Israel. In fact, when it submitted draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4, the delegation of Egypt presented the Secretariat with a text containing the wording found in draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4*. There were some technical problems lying with the Secretariat; the problems were not with the delegation of Egypt. The original document A/C.1/52/L.4 omitted revisions we had supplied to the draft resolution. I trust that the Secretary of the Committee will confirm this and thus clarify the misunderstanding of the delegation of Israel with regard to this draft resolution. If the delegation of Israel wishes to move formal amendments, as it already has done in document A/C.1/52/L.46, it has the opportunity and the freedom to do so.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): With reference to document A/C.1/52/L.46, which contains the text of an amendment to paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.4* proposed by the delegation of Israel, we have studied this text carefully, but are unable to detect in the Russian version any difference between the original and the amended versions of that paragraph. We are thus uncertain about what the amendment involves.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the First Committee): With reference to the statement made by the representative of Egypt, I would like to confirm that the original proposal by Egypt did not contain the words "and the activities of". However, these were added during the editing process, because the editors saw that the words had appeared in last year's text. This was thus a mistake by the Secretariat.

Programme of work

The Chairman: On Monday, 10 November, in accordance with the adopted programme of work, the First Committee will begin the final stage of its work, that is action on all draft resolutions submitted under all agenda items. In that connection I would like to remind delegations of the procedure that the Committee will observe during that stage of its work.

At the outset of each meeting, delegations will have an opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions. Then I shall give the floor to those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than in explanation of position or vote on the draft resolutions in a given cluster. Thereafter the floor will be given to those delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes on a draft resolution before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution, I will give the floor to those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution after a decision has been taken. In other words, delegations will have two opportunities to comment on a given draft resolution, both before and after a decision is taken. However, I would like to remind delegations that in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of a draft resolution are not entitled to make statements in explanation of vote; they are allowed only to make general statements at the beginning of a meeting or of the consideration of a new cluster.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to urge delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on any draft resolution kindly to inform the Secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins its action on the relevant cluster.

Delegations should also inform the Secretariat as early as possible about any decision to defer action on a draft resolution. I urge delegations, however, to refrain from resorting to deferment of action on draft resolutions as much as possible so as to ensure that the Committee can proceed with its action in an orderly fashion.

As decided by the Committee yesterday, we shall begin action on the following drafts in cluster 1: A/C.1/52/L.4, L.7, L.15, L.17, L.26, L.29, L.32/Rev.1, L.35, L.37, L.38, L.41 and L.44. When we conclude our action on the drafts in cluster 1, and time permitting, we will begin action on two of the draft resolutions in cluster 2, namely draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.24 and L.25/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.